1:. Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

CHAPTER I
ENVIRONMENT

THE COUNTRY

131 THE people who call themselves Nupe live in the heart of Nigeria, in the low basin that is formed by the valleys of the two rivers Niger and Kaduna, between 9° 30′ and 8° 30′ N.L. A line drawn from Leaba, on the Niger, eastward to Kataeregi marks the northern boundary of Nupe land, another line drawn eastward from Shari (or Tsaragi) to Abugi and on to the Niger south of Baro the southern boundary. The Niger, flowing almost straight north–south between Leaba and Jebba, divides Nupe country from Yoruba in the west; the slowly rising country, east of Lapai and Gidi, sloping upward towards the hills of Gbari country, forms the eastern boundary of Nupe.

133 It is a low-lying, softly undulating country, not more than 200 feet above sea-level in most parts. A few low ridges of broken, rocky hills stretch out, rib-like, from the river valleys, and curiously symmetrical flat-topped hillocks rise abruptly here and there from the plain. The highest points are no more than 800 feet above sea-level. At Jebba the Niger forces its way through a narrow passage formed by rocks, the ragged end of a short, broken chain of hills. Farther south, at Kpatagbā and Baro, and above Yankyedya in the north, hills and rocks close in upon the river. Rabá, the ancient river capital of Nupe kingdom, stands on high cliffs of red sandstone. Between cliffs and rocks the river bed is bordered by low banks on which stretches of thick rain-forest alternate with shrub and low bush. During the rains both forest-covered banks and open bush are flooded far inland and turned into vast swamps; the level of the Kaduna at Wuya rises by 30 feet; and in the Niger valley villages which lie on high ground in the dry season have the water of the river washing the threshold of their houses. Part of Jebba Island is flooded every year; and Nupeko, near the confluence of Niger and Kaduna, about two miles from the river in the dry season, can be reached only by canoe in the rains.

The big rivers Niger and Kaduna form the two axes of the country, an efficient, natural system of communication. It is no accident that the early Nupe kingdom grew in the area near the confluence of the two rivers, which were its first high-roads as well as its natural boundaries. A net of smaller rivers and creeks, rich in fish, covers the country, providing an efficient system of natural irrigation. In most parts of Nupe
134 land the soil is rich and fertile, especially in the thinly inhabited districts west of the Kaduna, the only part of Nupe which still possesses large areas of virgin forest. East of the Kaduna, especially round Bida, a dense population and intensive cultivation have reduced the fertility of the land. It is the typical soil of Northern Nigeria, red earth mixed with laterite and rich in silicates—a fact which becomes important for the native glass industry in Bida. In a few districts, round Sakpe and near

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942

FF52 Nupe FF52

TRIBAL MAP OF

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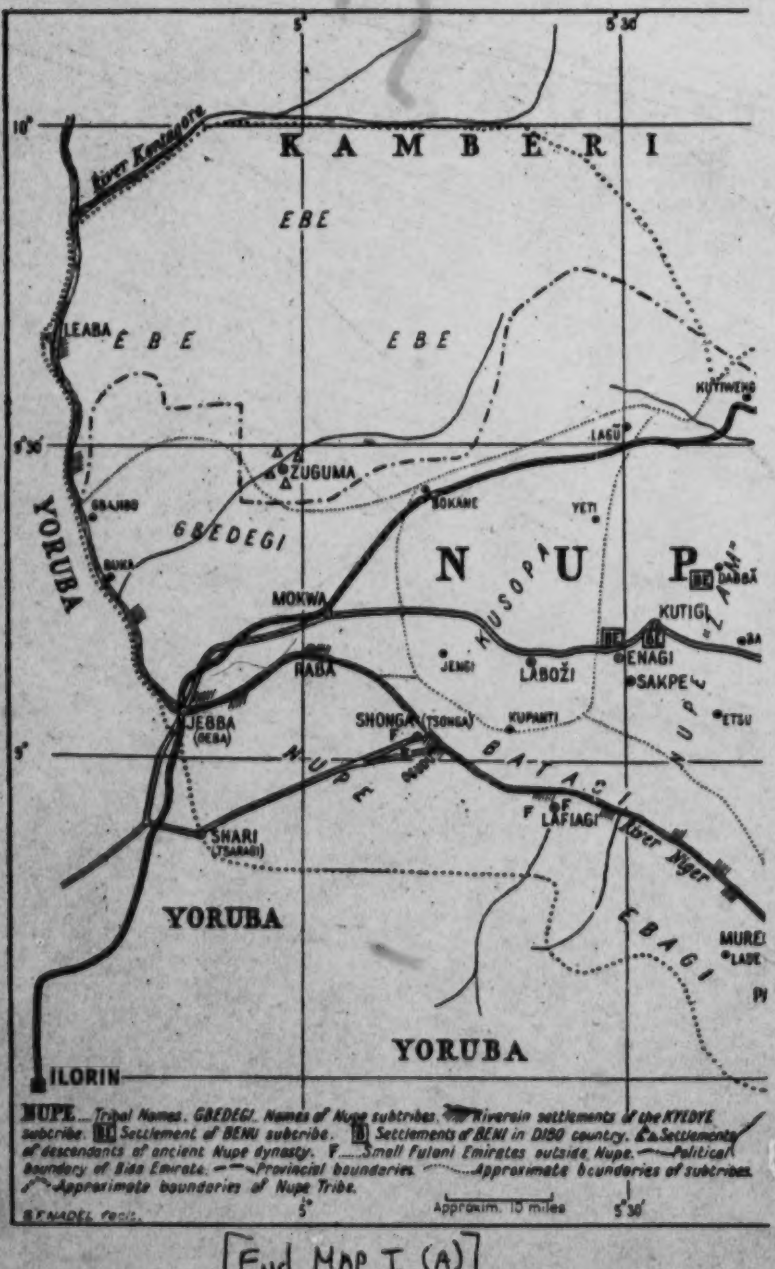

NUPE.—Tribal Names. GBEDEGI. Names of Nupe subtribes. Riverain settlements of the KYEDYE subcribe. Settlement of BENU subcribe. Settlements of BENI in DIBO country. Settlements of descendants of ancient Nupe dynasty. F.....Small Fulani Emirates outside Nupe. —— Political boundary of Bida Emirate. — — Provincial boundaries. ..... Approximate boundaries of subtribes. ---- Approximate boundaries of Nupe Tribe.

S.F. NADEL 1936.

[End Map I (A)]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

MAP OF NUPE

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[End Map I (B)]

THE NUPE

TRIBAL AND SUB-TRIBAL GROUPINGS AND DEMOGRAPHY

INTRODUCTION

105 The Nupe, speaking a number of related dialects, number about 360,000, and consist of the inhabitants of Bida Emirate, Niger Province, together with several politically separate sections. They do not form a territorially united group and, although every Nupe should extend hospitality to his fellow-tribesmen, they are not characterised by close internal cohesion. There is considerable variety of custom among the various "sub-tribes." Outstanding common features are: the cycle of myths of the culture-hero Tsoede, the observation of the *gunnu* ritual, belief in the supreme sky-god Soko, and the general structure of political ranks, age-sets, kinship system, and marriage rules.[1]

NOMENCLATURE

101 The Nupe call themselves *Nupeciši* or *Nupenciši* (sing. *Nupeci* or *Nupenci*), their language *Nupe* or *Esi Nupe*, and their country *Kin Nupe* ("the land of Nupe"). But Nupe in Zugurma and, generally speaking, north of the Kaduna River, also call themselves *Agabi*.[2] They are known by neighbouring tribes by the following names:[3]

By the Hausa: *Ba Nupe* or *Nufawa* (sing. *Nufe*).
" " Gbari of Kuta: *Abawa* (sing. *Bawa*).[4]
" " Gbari of Paiko and Birnin Gwari: *Ampoyi* or *Nife*.
" " Akanda (Yoruba): *Anupecwayi*.
" " Yoruba, Kambali, and Fon: *Takpa* or *Tapa* (*Tappah*).
" " Ijumu (Yoruba) and Igbira: *Anupe*.
" " Ebe (Nupe sub-tribe): *Anuperi*.
" " Lopawa: *Duma*.

LOCATION

131 The Nupe live in the low basin formed by the valleys of the Niger and Kaduna Rivers, between 9° 30′ and 8° 30′ north, in an area roughly 7,000 square miles in extent. Their northern boundary runs from Share (Tsaragi) to the Niger south of Baro; the western boundary is the Niger from Leaba to Jebba and south to Share; the eastern boundary is the line of the foothills east of Lapai and Gidi. Small sections of the Nupe are also scattered through Nigeria, especially in villages and towns on the Niger. The largest of these groups is that of the Basa or Basa Nge, in the north-west of Igala Division of Kabba Province opposite Lokoja.

131 The Nupe form the great majority of the population in the Bida and Agaie 167 Emirates of Niger Province, and in the Pategi-Lafiagi Emirate of Ilorin Province. There are also Nupe in the north-east of Ilorin and in the south of Borgu Emirate. They form a compact minority of the population in other chieftainships and political districts under the authority of Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbira chiefs, as follows: around Zugurma in the Kontagora Division of Niger Province, under the Hausa Emir of Kontagora; in Shona and Share Districts of Ilorin Province, under the

[1] Nadel, 1942, pp. 12–26; 1935a, pp. 278–9; Meek, 1925, Vol. I, p. 34. Thanks to the publications of Professor S. F. Nadel, based on intensive fieldwork in Bida Emirate and elsewhere in the thirties, it is possible to treat many aspects of Nupe culture and social organization more systematically and also more briefly than is the case for most of the peoples of the Niger-Benue confluence.
[2] Mathews, 1926.
[3] Nadel, 1942, p. 12; Temple, 1919, p. 282 and index.
[4] The Ebe sub-tribe is also called Abawa by Hausa speakers.

[pp. 1-16 Non-existent]

131 Fulani-Yoruba Emir of Ilorin; in Eggan District, Koton Karifi Division, Kabba 167 Province, under the *Ata* of Igbira.[5]

NEIGHBOURING TRIBES

101 Neighbours of the Nupe to the west are Fulani and Ilorin Yoruba; to the east and north-east, Gbari, Basa, and Igbira; to the north, Kamberi, Kamuku, and Hausa; to the south, Yoruba (Ilorin, Yagba, Bunu, and Aworo); to the north-west, Bussawa and Borgawa.

NUPE SUB-TRIBES[6]

619 634 [167] Nupe sub-tribes are both territorial and cultural entities, each speaking its own dialect and often united by a network of kinship ties and a belief in common descent. But a great deal of migration has taken and still takes place between one sub-tribe and another. Some other peoples, such as the Kakanda, are in the process of being assimilated as Nupe sub-tribes.

Beni (Bini): one of the "original" Nupe sub-tribes which, together with Kyedye and Bataci, forms the nucleus of the Nupe kingdom. Traditionally Beni became a political unit when the 12 towns of the Beni confederacy recognized the supremacy of one of their number and gave allegiance and tribute to its chief; they were bound to fight together and support each other in times of war. The 12 towns share common insignia, a common mythology, and a specialized form of the *gunnu* cult. To-day the Beni are concentrated mainly in and around Bida, Kutigi, and Lemu, but there are a few living near the confluence of the Niger and Kaduna Rivers. They have a high reputation as farmers and craftsmen.

Bataci (Batachi, Bataciži): also an "original" sub-tribe, coming under the local overlordship of the Kyedye. They are considered to be the original inhabitants of the riverain area and live on the pools and backwaters of the lower reaches of the Niger.

Kyedye (Kede): a term often used for all canoe- and fishermen on the river, referring specifically to a group known as *Eyapaciži* ("canoe-men"). They in turn refer to all other groups of Nupe collectively as *Laticiži* ("farmers"), and call the non-Kyedye sub-tribes *Kintsoži* ("owners of the land," i.e., original inhabitants). The Kyedye had established themselves on the Kaduna River and on Jebba Island about 40 years ago. The emergence of this sub-tribe consisted in the growth of a colonizing and dominating group, expanding from Muregi at the confluence of the Niger and Kaduna,[7] and although they form a minority in the area they have established themselves as local rulers over the Bataci.

The Kyedye do not intermarry with Bataci and other sub-tribes but, on the contrary, stress a sharp tribal and cultural division. They are the only purely riverain Nupe sub-tribe and are said to "rule the water." They are to be found mainly on the left bank of the Niger and on the Kaduna River, in the Bida, Agaie, Lapai, and Kontagora Emirates of Niger Province. Others are on the right bank of the Niger in the Ilorin, Lafiagi, and Pategi Emirates of Ilorin Province, and in the Koton Karifi Division of Kabba Province. There are 10 main villages, Muregi being the only purely Kyedye settlement; all the others are built on sites of "native" villages. Another small group lives at Onitsha as canoe builders, and there is a large and prosperous colony at Lokoja.

They are divided into two sections, of which one, Kyedye Tifin or Gbéde,[8] a semi-riverain group upstream from Jebba Island, is subject to the other, Kyedye Tako,[9] who live downstream.

[6] Nadel, 1942, p. 13; 1937b, p. 424.
[6] Nadel, 1942, pp. 19–26; 1935a, pp. 258–9, 237, 275; 1940a, pp. 164–71.
[7] According to Nadel, this colonization is still going on.
[8] The main Kyedye Tifin villages are: Muregi, Cegu, Leaba, Shankyedye, Yankyedye, Sambo, Sonka, Egwa, Bazumagi, Buka, Bele.
[9] The main Kyedye Tako villages are: Kpakefu, Ogudu, Ketsogi, Lepkata, Endozigi, Ela, Difu, Gbaradosi, Dokomba, Kpatagba, Kacha Wunengi, Gungi, Etsumutum, Gidi.

NUPE.

AUTHORITIES:

Mr. T. A. G. Budgen. Mr. E. C. Duff.
Mr. E. G. M. Dupigny.

131 The Nupe people are distributed over the southern part
771 of the Protectorate in clans that have little connection with each other. Probably nearly half are pagans practising different forms of religion, the remainder are Muhammadans. The Niger Province is the headquarters of the tribe, who are to be found in their greatest numbers in the vicinity of the Niger and Kaduna Rivers. They claim to be indigenous, but some authorities
179 trace a connection between them and the Gabi, erstwhile inhabitants of Egypt. There is a legend to the effect that a certain stranger, a hunter, called Abduazizi, travelling from the east, arrived with his family at the town of Doko Daji, where he settled amongst the Bini. He was given the title of Nefiu, the Arabic word for fugitive, whence arises the corruption Nufe, Nupe. It is also asserted that Nupe is not so much the name
[101] of a tribe as of a language, and that it may well be that the new
197 comers adopted the speech of the older inhabitants, the Gwari or Gbari, between which and Nupe there are now only

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

FF52 Nupe FF52

dialectical differences. Many words are identical; they have a similar custom of splitting the verb, and the main difference is that where the Gbari form the negative by the terminal letter R, the Nupe form it by M. It was at Nupiko where the Kaduna flows into the Niger, that Edegi first consolidated the clans under one Chief and founded the Nupe Kingdom (*vide* History of the Niger Province). It was from that region Rabba, that those Nupe came who now inhabit the upper reaches of the Niger in Kontagora and Borgu to Yelwa and beyond into Sokoto Province, where their tribal marks consist of two deep scars on either side of the nose. From this northerly point they follow the river down through Ilorin Province and Kabba, though her Egga is the only place where they are of pure race, as elsewhere they have intermarried freely with neighbouring tribes. These Egga Nupe migrated there from Bida. There are also settlements of Nupe right up the Benue as far as the Ribado Division of Yola, for they are a great trading people and take advantage of the markets on the waterways. There are 1,047 in Nassarawa Emirate; elsewhere they have not been censussed.

The distinctive tribal mark is a curved line from the bridge of the nose to the corner of the mouth, on the right-hand side of the face.

The Nupe population of Agaie number 24,335, and of Lapai 5,061.

The size of the clan may very roughly be assessed at over 100,000 in the Niger Province.

The Emir was chosen from one of the three royal families, Osuman Zaki, Masaba, and Umaru Majigi, all descendants of the Filane founder of the dynasty Mallam Danyo, each of the three families in succession having the right to rule the clan. The Elders would meet together and discuss who was likely to make the best Chief, and having chosen would consult the Mallamai as to the propriety of their selection. As some amongst the Mallamai claimed the gift of foreknowledge, their advice was almost invariably followed. Delay was avoided as far as possible, because in the interval between the death of the Nupe King and the appointment of his successor (which might not be till after the burial), no law could be enforced. If any crime were committed during that period the perpetrator was safe from subsequent punishment, and any prisoner who escaped might not be recaptured.

Thus on the occasion of the death of Muhammadu in 1916, which occurred at nine in the evening, his wife performed the last rites before his death was known outside the compound, and he was buried at 3 a.m. in his house, the public not being acquainted of the fact till later in the day.

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
FF52 Nupe FF52
Kede

634
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131

[p. 169]

THE COUNTRY OF THE KEDE

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
FF52 Nupe FF52
Kede

THE KEDE: A RIVERAIN STATE IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

By S. F. NADEL

I. Introduction

THE Kyedye or Kede,[1] with whom this paper is concerned, are a section of the large Nupe tribe of Northern Nigeria, whose general culture and social organization I have described elsewhere.[2] The Kede have many cultural traits in common with their mother tribe; their kinship system is the same; they speak the dialect which is spoken to-day by the majority of the Nupe sub-tribes and has become the acknowledged language of the Emirate, Nupe 'proper'; they have also adopted the religion of Nupe kingdom, Islam. Yet combined with this cultural affinity we find certain marked divergencies. The Kede are a riverain group—the only purely riverain group among the various Nupe sub-tribes. Their economic pursuits and general social life centre round the river on which they live and from which they derive their livelihood. This means already that their social and cultural life must present certain features which are absent in Greater Nupe. Their political organization, moreover, contains certain distinctive and unusual traits—unusual even for Africa at large. It is for this unusual nature rather than for its relation to practical problems of African administration that I have chosen the political organization of this small Nigerian sub-tribe for the subject of this contribution.

II. Demography

The main body of the Kede lives to-day on the Rivers Niger and Kaduna between 8° 30′ and 9° 40′ North Latitude, inhabiting a narrow strip of land on both banks. The Kede share their territory with a number of other tribal sections of the Nupe, which lead a semi-riverain life, pursuing—unlike the Kede—agriculture

[1] The proper Nupe name is Kyedye. But the Hausa, Yoruba, and other neighbouring groups (as well as, to-day, Government officials) prefer the more easily pronounced Kede. We shall adopt, for the sake of simplicity, this latter name.

[2] See *Africa*, viii, 1935, and also my forthcoming book, *A Black Byzantium*.

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
FF52 Nupe FF52
Kede

beside fishing and canoeing. Their villages and hamlets are scattered between the Kede settlements all along the river banks.[1] The sharp division, cultural and tribal, between the Kede and the other semi-riverain groups is illustrated in the linguistic usage: for Kede the word *eyapaciʒi* (canoemen), is used almost synonymously, while the other groups are referred to, collectively, as *laticiʒi* (farmers). Tradition, too, has its contribution to make: it represents the Kede as alien immigrants who have come from outside into their present habitat and settled there among the 'aboriginal' population. This tradition (to which we shall return later) is again reflected in linguistic usage, the different semi-riverain groups which to-day are the neighbours of the Kede in the river valley being spoken of, collectively, as *kintsoʒi* (owners of the land—that is, original inhabitants).

We possess detailed population figures only for one part of Kede country, for what is to-day the Kede District of Bida Emirate. But we may take these figures as representative of the whole area inhabited by the Kede.[2] In a total population of 12,066, the Kede number 2,225, and the *kintsoʒi* (comprising various sub-tribes) 9,742, the small rest (99) being made up by non-Nupe strangers who live in Kede District. The Kede thus form a minority in their own country—the country which bears their name. But it rightly bears their name and rightly is called 'their' country, for the Kede minority represents the ruling group, and their chief the ruler of this whole territory and the different groups which inhabit it, Kede as well as non-Kede.

But Kede country is itself part of a larger political system, the Nupe Emirate. In pre-British times, the country of the Kede lay almost entirely on Nupe territory or, more correctly, on the territory ruled by the *Etsu* (king) of Nupe, under whom it enjoyed the status of a semi-autonomous, vassal State. Under British administration, Kede country, greatly affected by the re-alignment of the

[1] They comprise sections of the following Nupe sub-tribes: the Gbedegi on the upper stretch of the Niger; the Bataci, or Marsh Dwellers, on the lower reaches; a few groups of Beni near the confluence of Niger and Kaduna; the Kupa round Eggan in the south; Dibo or Ʒitako near Katcha and Baro; and, finally, a group of Nupe from Gbara, the ancient capital of Nupe kingdom, on the Kaduna and on the Niger near Patigi.

[2] These figures are taken from an official, unpublished, provincial census, for the use of which I am greatly indebted to the Administration of Niger Province. While the figures are perhaps not correct in every detail, they are reliable enough for the purpose of this argument.

9:Nadel E-5 (1934-1935) 1935 FF52 Nupe FF52

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[131] **The King's Hangmen: a judicial organization in Central Nigeria.** *By Dr. S. F. Nadel.* 143

Travelling on the Niger in Nupe country, between Jebba in the North and Eggá in the South, one comes across a certain group of villages, curiously distinguished from the rest of the riverain villages by the special name which the Nupe have for them: they call them *ledu*, in the plural *leduzhi*, which means, literally, 'prison.'

I.

778 693 [562] The common name stands for a common organization to which they all belong. And as an apt symbol for an organization expressed by such a name each of these villages possesses the same emblem: a sacred iron chain (fig. 2). As a rule this chain is kept in the chief's house, and only very reluctantly would he show it as in fig. 4. At any rate, he would always make sure first that no woman (the anthropologist's wife included) is near the place when he brings it out into the daylight—for no woman is allowed to set eyes on this sacred implement. It is a heavy iron chain, often some 30 feet long, with strong leg- and arm-irons on it—what we should call a typical slave- or prison-chain. It is kept rolled up in a round wooden tray; but in one place, at Jebba, I found a railway wheel serving this purpose. The chain will always smell abominably, and will be covered with flies, the [782] unmistakable sign that the traditional sacrifice of beer, and blood of fowl, has been performed properly.

There exist altogether eight such *ledu* villages. They are distributed along the Niger banks in a surprisingly regular manner, always between 10 to 15 miles apart from one another. The names [103] of the *ledu* villages, from north to south, are as follows: Jebba, Gbere (fig. 1), Tada, Jiragi, Sālati, Fofo, Tayi, Cewuru. Two *ledu* villages, Jebba and Tada—an offshoot of Jebba—possess, besides the [532] chains, sacred bronze figures (fig. 3) which signify that these two villages are the 'old ones,' the heads of the *ledu* organization. The chain itself is called *ẹ̀pā Tsoede*—the 'chain of Tsoede'—and chains and figures are said to have been brought to these places by the mythical ancestor of Nupe kingdom, Tsoede.[1]

173 The many versions of the Tsoede tradition which exist in Nupe country differ in details only. The main facts are always the same: Tsoede was a Nupe man, who was sent as slave to the Atta (king) of Idah, at the time when the Nupe were tributary to Idah. From a slave Tsoede soon became the Atta's favourite and friend. Presented by the Atta with slaves, wealth and powerful magic, but envied by the Atta's relatives, he had to flee from Idah after the Atta's death. In a magical bronze canoe, one of the Atta's presents, he paddled up the Niger and finally reached Nupe country. Here he settled down, and amongst the people of his country he distributed his wealth, the insignia of his rulership, and the emblems of his powerful magic. Very soon he delivered Nupe country from

[1] According to Nupe etymology the name Tsoede is derived from *Etsu Ede*, or *'tsu Ede*, *i.e.*, king Ede. This explains the other name by which the culture hero of the Nupe is also known, *Edegi*.